GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:767
ANSWERED ON:25.02.2009
AIR POLLUTION IN RURAL AREAS
Athawale Shri Ramdas

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the expansion of industries has led to increase of air-pollution in the rural areas of the country;

(b) if so, whether any study has been conducted regarding the impact of air-pollution in the rural areas;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) the steps taken/proposed to be taken by the Government to increase awareness amongst the common people regarding air-pollution in rural areas?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT & FORESTS(SHRI NAMO NARAIN MEENA)

(a) The level of air pollution, particularly in terms of Respirable Suspended Particulate Matter (RSPM) in ambient air, is showing an increasing trend in many areas in the country. This is due to industrialization including expansion of existing industries as well as rise in population, increasing number of vehicles and DG sets, rapid urbanization, construction activities and agricultural practices including burning of post-harvest residual stalks.

(b) to (d) A comprehensive study has not been conducted in this regard. However, as per the Environment Impact Assessment Notification, 2006 under the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986, new projects or capacity expansion of existing projects for certain categories of industries require prior environmental clearance (EC). This involves study of probable impact of the projects and mitigation measures. Public hearing is also a part of the process.

Further, studies have been carried out by the Punjab Pollution Control Board (PPCB) in the rural areas of Punjab relating to assessment of quality of ambient air due to burning of post harvest residual stalks in agriculture fields. The PPCB has taken up a mass awareness programme to educate the common people in general and farmers in particular in this regard.